2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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(35,107). It is difficult not to assume that many Nyanja had formerly called themselves Ngoni.

Table II

	1926	1931	1945
Mzimba district			
Ngoni	25,484	24,627	44,948
Tumbuka	46,029	78,483	89,135
Cewa	14,041	2,411	21,891
Yao	20	—	—
Tonga	3,052	605	32
Nkonde	141	—	—
Others	334	156	202
Total	89,101	106,282	156,208
Ncheu district			
Ngoni	64,023	46,308	15,242
Cewa	11	4,372	2,815
Nyanja	334	25,393	60,400
Cikunda	360	940	1,336
Yao	203	1,064	3,267
Nguru, etc.	—	—	4,448
Others	13	278	182
Total	64,944	78,355	87,690

Since the two Ngoni kingdoms are the subject of this book and not the secession states, the position of the rulers of those states as Native Authorities and the circumstances of their secession from the two main groups will not be examined here. The three secession states in the north were under Chiefs Ciwere and Msakambewa in Dowa district and Jere in Kotakota district. The four connected formerly with the central Ngoni were under Chiefs Kacere and Kacindamoto in Dedza, Masula in Lilongwe and Vumbwe in Cholo.

In the 1930's, when I was living sometimes in the northern kingdom, sometimes in the central, and for a time in the Ngoni state under Chief Jere, I was aware that the existence of the two kingdoms and of the seven secession states did not preclude a great deal of contact between the Ngoni of the different areas. The stream of travel in Nyasaland from south to north and from north to south along the one trunk road, brought Ngoni as visitors from one kingdom to the other, from the smaller states to both kingdoms, and from 'the Ngoni of the dispersion' living in towns to visit their relatives and friends in the Ngoni kingdoms and states. These visits might be social, to see parents or to marry a wife; they might be for economic purposes, to invest in or sell cattle, to supervise cotton or tobacco marketing; or they might be for ritual purposes such as mourning. When I travelled in the central Ngoni kingdom in 1936 with Y. M. Cibambo, the historian of the northern

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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Ngoni, he was welcomed everywhere as one who could speak with authority about the culture and customs of his people, and the central Ngoni, when talking about their history and customs, wanted him to realize that they too were 'real Ngoni' (*Ngoni eni eni*). The general relationships before 1939 were that the political separation between the kingdoms and their secession states was accepted as final. On the social and cultural level, the Ngoni from one state sought contacts with the Ngoni from another state or kingdom in preference to contacts with other ethnic groups. In using the term Ngoni in this context, as throughout this book, I am referring to people with Swazi and trans-Zambesi clan descent names.

THE MAIN POLITICAL ELEMENTS IN THE NGONI KINGDOMS

The District Commissioner of Ncheu in his report for 1935, after the Native Administration Ordinance had been in operation for over a year, wrote of the central Ngoni kingdom: 'The tribal system is, comparatively speaking, intact under a chief who commands universal respect.' [1] The political system of the Ngoni in both kingdoms was based on a ruling aristocracy in which the Paramount of the royal clan was the head, supported by influential members of his own clan and of other leading clans. There were three main elements in this ruling aristocracy: the Paramount, with whose office was linked provision for a regency at the death of the incumbent and during the minority of his successor; the subordinate chiefs who ruled under him in recognized areas; and the heads of Swazi clans called *alumuzana*. I shall use these terms, chiefs and *alumuzana*, when speaking of the Ngoni kingdoms. In the northern kingdom all six chiefs was of the royal clan. In the central kingdom none of the six chiefs were of the royal clan but, with one exception, all were recognized as *alumuzana*. This distribution of authority among the six chiefs under the Paramount in the northern kingdom meant that several of the leading *alumuzana* felt excluded from political control of the villages and area which they were said to 'own', because they had no recognized court. This led at times to friction between them and the chiefs of the royal clan. In the central kingdom the position was different, for though some *alumuzana* were recognized as chiefs, others were not, and friction occurred at times between the chiefs and other *alumuzana*, and also between the chiefs and members of the royal clan. In both areas allegiance to the Paramount was, however, a strong unifying element.

The ruling aristocracy was in its turn supported by a hierarchy of officials, some traditional, some appointed to meet modern requirements

[1] *Annual Report of the Provincial Commissioner for the Nyasaland Protectorate*, 1935, p. 54.

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821 or other pregnant announcement: 'Listen. Do you hear? The chief says there is a great matter being discussed. It is not here but elsewhere. The case is very important.' Then the women took their poles and struck the tall wooden pounding mortars with resounding blows. A Ngoni elder commented to me: 'Listen. They are washing the moon from its clouds, so that it may come out of the darkness and shine again.' The event was curiously reminiscent of an eclipse during my stay in an Indian village when pots were struck 'to wash the moon'.

Reckoning of numbers

802 The Ngoni used tens as units in counting. They began with the right hand clenched, like the fist they raised in the traditional greeting. One by one they raised from the bent-in position the thumb and each finger in turn, and then did the same with the left hand. When they reached ten they struck one hand against the other with all the fingers extended and said '*ihlumi*' (ten), and for twenty, thirty and so on they struck their hands together the correct number of times. For one hundred they used the word '*ikulu*', but it was generally agreed that this had not been in their original counting [177] terms, but had been brought in when the Zulu Bible came to them with the first Scottish missionaries.

Ngoni history

● 814 To a people like the Ngoni whose remembered past was one of migrations, conquests and settlement in a new country, their history was no dead verbal record but a living reminder [186] of their past achievements, and of their cultural and political differences from the people around them in Nyasaland. There were many occasions in Ngoni village life, especially in the villages of chiefs and heads of leading clans when recitals of history took place. Frequent references were made to historical events in songs, court cases, when visiting Ngoni came, in the vernacular readers used in the Scottish Mission

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schools, in sermons by Ngoni ministers in the churches. Fathers gathered their children together, boys and girls, on such occasions, and said to them: 'Listen. Do you hear? This is about our people from the beginning. Remember well. Do not forget, for the Ngoni cannot forget their past.'

A young man of about twenty related to me how his father, the head of a leading clan, used to talk to him about the Ngoni past when they went on hunting trips together on Mount Choma, where Paramount Mbelwa and his Ngoni had first settled in Northern Nyasaland. In among the dry grass the father showed the boy the sites of former villages, the polished floors and the sturdy door-posts of the huts, and the stumps of the kraal fences. He heard in that historical setting the story of one of the famous secessions from the main Ngoni kingdom. 'Early one morning,' said his father, 'we woke up, we who remained, and we saw that Ciwere had gone. All the people shouted "Ciwere has separated from us. He has separated indeed. Our Paramount is poor because of his departure."'

It was largely through their own efforts that the Ngoni succeeded in teaching their history to their children in the schools. More than one Ngoni leader who had been educated by the Scottish Mission began writing the history of his own people, and in their villages I found several young men recording in writing the traditions as told them by their grandfathers. One Ngoni minister, Rev. Y. M. Cibambo, for twenty years systematically recorded and checked and compared these traditions. His books in the local vernacular were used as readers in the mission schools, and later translated into English as *My Ngoni of Nyasaland*.

Sermons in church by Ngoni ministers not only referred to historical events which were illustrated in songs or recorded in oral traditions but to the role of the famous diviners, called prophets, 'dreamers of the head', who foretold the advent and manner of arrival of the Europeans. The Ngoni Christian leaders went further than this. They used the

information is insufficient for any reconstruction in great detail, but the general principles are clear and to some extent our conclusions can be checked by reference to material from other areas, particularly the nineteenth century accounts of the Ngoni of Northern Nyasaland and the Zulu. The account of present-day marriage is based on information collected in the field during 1946-9.[1]

The period of the 1890's is chosen for comparison with the present because of the catastrophic change in Ngoni life which occurred in 1898 when they were defeated by the British. Old people who were alive during the period are still available for questioning and many younger people have been told of those times by their parents and grandparents. Although Ngoni cannot generally remember beyond their grandparents, genealogies collected now yield some information about the 1890's and link that period to the present. Important social changes occurred in 1898, changes which for the greater part were, and still are, regretted by the Ngoni, and these accentuate the difference between time present and time past. The past is recollected and recounted and has a moral value. Children are taught the glories of the past to compensate them for the inadequacies of the present. The teaching of tribal history as a school subject reinforces this view. With the passage of time the past has been idealized and simplified but the picture is still clear enough for us to be able to distinguish probable fact from unlikely rationalization. Marriage in 'the time of peace', as the period prior to 1898 is called, is one aspect of this picture.

Marriage is one part of kinship, for it is by the twin processes of marriage and childbirth that the web of kinship is spun. For the purposes of our analysis we have had to sever marriage from its context in what may appear at times rather an arbitrary fashion. A society is a whole, if not always a well integrated whole, and no one part of it can be fully understood without a simultaneous knowledge of all its other parts. Societies persist, more or less, through time, and it is clear that we cannot hope to grasp the total significance of the working of a society at any one time without a knowledge of the changes or lack of change in that society both before and after. Yet we cannot marshal all these relationships simultaneously, let alone present them through the medium of words. Our attempt to comprehend the present cannot wait until we have full knowledge of the future, and our analysis of one sector of a system must proceed in advance of our synthesis of the whole. Ngoni society has persisted through the last sixty years rather less than more, and it may well be argued that present-day Ngoni society is poorly integrated. Nevertheless it is to be hoped that an analysis of Ngoni marriage may, on the one hand, demonstrate

[1] I made two visits to the Fort Jameson Ngoni while on the staff of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, spending in all a year and eight months there. I was assisted by my clerk, Mr. M. B. Lukhero, in inquiring into former conditions as well as observing contemporary social life.

181 that the defeat of 1898 is important. Although they claim to have conquered
186 all their African neighbours, Ngoni do not claim success over the British.
Instead, defeat at the hands of the British is cited in explanation of every
648 present-day failure and of every departure from traditional practice. Ngoni
186 say, "If we had not been defeated we would not have lost our land and we would not now go hungry"; and "If we had not been defeated the tribes would not have been mixed up and we could follow our customs properly"; [729] and so on. In the past, captives taken by the Ngoni were rapidly indoctrinated with Ngoni ways and themselves became proud Ngoni; Ngoni complain that now, although captured by Europeans, they never become Europeans.

538 The general legends of the past from which these notions are derived are
814 common knowledge. In the main they are passed on orally and are maintained by the teaching of tribal history in schools, the appeals to old military traditions, when recruiting for the Northern Rhodesia Regiment, the conversations of planters comparing one tribe with another as labourers, by the reports of administrators and by the writings of ethnologists.

643 The link between the Ngoni of today and their illustrious forebears is also
182 symbolized in the office of the Paramount Chief. He bears the name of his [551] warrior great-grandfather, and the formal aspects of his relationship to his people are explained by reference to his ancestors' achievements. He cannot attend funerals or take part in some of his own marriage ceremonies because "he has already conquered all others"; he cannot be expected to walk through the bush with the District Officer because "he has already conquered the whole world". He basks in his great-grandfather's invincibility, for in this context the defeat of 1898 is forgotten. The relationship between the Paramount Chief and his eleven minor chiefs is partly determined by the distribution of power in different branches of the royal lineage before the European conquest, and the division of the country into these minor chiefdoms is a visible reminder of that distribution.

829 Associated with these tales of military exploits and royal power are myths
178 about former customs. Ngoni say that in the old days they used to hunt, or marry, or build villages, in a particular way and that now they do differently. Frequently when I asked what happened in such-and-such a situation I would be told what my informant thought would have happened before 1898 rather [563] than what he had seen happen now. Thus if we ask what payments do Ngoni make in marriage we are told that there are two payments, "snuff-box" and bridewealth, consisting of one or more beasts. Further inquiry reveals that these payments are now made only infrequently and that the period referred to is before 1898. More detailed investigation suggests that in many pre-1898 marriages they were not made and that when they were made they did not always consist of beasts. Ngoni do not deny these facts but they do deny their relevance. To them the distinctively Ngoni way of marrying is with these two payments, and it is this process alone which merits the vernacular adjective—*cingoni*. They regret that people no longer marry in this way and

8: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5

quarrels in a village the headman is blamed by the chief for not controlling his people well. All disputes are best settled out of court, even if they must be referred to court later on. Therefore a quarrel in village A brings to light all the alliances and cleavages which link A with other villages and differentiate it from them. The headman of A appeals to B for support, invoking the historical incident linking them, and hopes to settle affairs of his village with the authority of B's approval behind him. For if the headman of B is a potential ally he is also a potential rival, and the dissident section in A may themselves invoke their link with B and transfer their allegiance to him. Thus although the details of the relationship between A and B, and the historical incident connected with it, may not be widely known there is considerable external pressure on them to maintain their relationship. Connexions of this kind, mainly between villages, but also between chiefdoms, play a large part in contemporary Ngoni life. Men walk twenty miles to a funeral and women carry pots of beer all day in response to ties of this kind.

Thus we see, on the one hand, that tribal legends are widely known, relate to pre-conquest times, and do not directly influence conduct; and, on the other, that legends associated with inter-group relations are known only by the groups concerned, may relate to either before or after 1898, and do directly influence action. Why is there this difference? We may regard the former legends as of significance mainly in external relations and the latter in internal. Within the tribe, and more particularly within the minor chiefdom, inter-group relations are still largely determined by Ngoni themselves, however much they may have altered in form and content since 1898 and however much Ngoni are part of a wide system. Movement between villages is only slightly controlled by the Administration and in quarrelling, in marriage and adultery, beer-drinking and hoeing, Ngoni men and women choose their own allies and enemies. Incidents in reality give rise to inter-group relations and are subsequently invoked to maintain them. History is written not in books but in the names of groups and in the remembered connexions between them, and as these connexions gradually change so local legendary history is gradually rewritten.

In external relations the Ngoni never act as a tribe except within the framework of European-controlled institutions. As yet no myth of origin is needed to explain the fact that Ngoni and Cewa representatives sit together on the Provincial Council save that the Administration put them there. The world of external relations is one of cultural heterogeneity and comparative adequate documentation. In this field legends have only a limited social function. They differentiate tribe X from tribe Y but do not relate them to each other.

Lastly we must consider Ngoni history proper. There have been many alleged accounts of Ngoni history published in Europe and South Africa, but these seem to have had little influence on the Fort Jameson Ngoni. Recently several histories have appeared in the vernacular, and tribal history

8: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5

is now a subject taught in the primary schools. All these are based on the recollections of old Ngoni men and women more than on contemporary documents, of which there are very few. We must therefore regard them as written legends rather than proper histories. Differences between one version and another are sometimes related to the different political affiliations of these providing the information.[6] The period from 1821 to 1898 is treated in detail and the remaining fifty years dismissed in a few lines. It seems likely therefore that in time the tribal legend will be ossified, or that at least there will be one version widely known. Yet the vernacular texts are written in the school language (Nyanja) which is not yet the ordinary village speech (Nsenga), and are learned largely parrot-fashion, sometimes even with unintelligible words included. It remains to be seen how much of what is learnt under these conditions is carried over into life outside the classroom.

With the increasing documentation of modern life we might well hope that the period of legend alone will end and Ngoni history proper will begin. Unfortunately this is not so. Although it is fairly easy to find out from contemporary documents what went on in tribal affairs from 1890 to 1898, with the imposition of British rule a curtain descended. Official reports grow shorter and shorter with the years for there was less and less to record. Towards the end of the British South Africa Company's rule the published information on Ngoni life was little more than the annual statement, covering the whole of Northern Rhodesia, that "the conduct of the natives has been satisfactory". From the beginning of Colonial Office control in 1924 reports have lengthened, but these have dealt with the history not of the Ngoni tribe but of the Eastern Province and of Northern Rhodesia. These larger regions have become the significant units of government, not individual tribes and chiefdoms. The Fort Jameson Ngoni have become more and more closely integrated with the wider society and less and less have any history of their own. When the Ngoni were making history they lacked means to record it; now that means are available they have no history to record.

Thus we see that in this transitional society internal and external relations, as well as the level of technical skill, influence both the way in which people relate themselves to their past and also the timing and content of their written history.

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"A Durban Man" (Deare, Major George Russel). "Eighteen months with the last of the slave raiders." *Natal Weekend Advertiser*, 6 April–11 May 1929. (Page reference to typescript in Central African Archives.)

6. Read and Winterbottom have pointed out that informants from Northern Nyasaland assert that their Paramount Chief is the heir of Zwangondaba, while those from Fort Jameson say that their Chief is the heir. Cf. Read, *Tradition and Prestige*, p. 467, and Winterbottom, *Outline Histories*, p. 17.

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5

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the reason for this enthusiasm about being 'written up'. 'At last', he said, 'someone will know about us.' He went on to speak with regret about the old days when one or two missionaries and others really knew about the Ngoni and could speak their language. He then spoke with bitterness about the present, lamenting that the Ngoni were no longer regarded as a great people. Gradually it became evident that the Ngoni, being very conscious themselves of their distinctive cultural identity, and of their positive achievements in setting up the Ngoni state, expect other people to recognize this too. They keep constantly before them memories of their past greatness, and they dwell gloomily on the coming of the Europeans which marked the end of their ascendancy.

IV. The Historical Sense of the Ngoni. From the beginning of my stay among the Ngoni the chiefs and leading men impressed on me the importance of knowing about their past. In each area the Paramount Chief arranged that 'historians', that is, old men accredited by him as having correct information, should come to dictate Ngoni history to me. At first this relating of history took place in public before any who liked to listen. The old historians, however, grizzled warriors of many fights, trembled and stammered in giving their accounts, because the Paramount Chief so impressed on them the importance of the occasion, and pulled them up sharply when they hesitated over names or events. At the subsequent private sittings, where the old men could argue fiercely with each other without any fear of causing shame before an audience, the accounts were much more coherent, and, as the Paramount Chief assured me, correct. After one such taking down of history in the Paramount's village, I went to stay in the village of one of these 'historians', a very much respected *mulumuzana* and one of the 'best families'. He gently but firmly put aside my scheme of studying village organization and economic life, saying, 'First you ought to know about our beginnings'.[1] After giving me still more detailed accounts of Ngoni history, he explained that though much of their social life was mixed up to-day with that of other tribes, their history and traditions were distinct and belonged to them alone. Hence I ought to have it written

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[1] He used the verb *kudauka*, which implies root or origin.

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814 down fully and correctly. When I arrived in Chief Gomani's country, 124 after having stayed in the other two Ngoni areas, the chiefs and leading [114] men whom he called to see me asked at once, 'What did the other Ngoni do to show you they were Ngoni? *We* want you first to hear the story of our people.' If I said to any older man of good standing, that is of a true Ngoni clan, 'Tell me about the Ngoni', he invariably began with the traditions of the south and their trek north.

173 I have some fifteen long texts[1] of Ngoni history, most of which [126] begin with the stories of Dingiswayo and Zwidi, leading on to the rise of Chaka and the Ngoni exodus from the south. These texts not only show a measure of agreement with each other, but they also are verifiable by established history as recorded by Europeans. Those texts which came from Gomani's country contain different material after the exodus from the south. For the Ngoni under the leadership of the [614] Maseko clan came north with Mzilikazi and the Matabele, and crossing the Zambesi alone, went east of Lake Nyasa into Tanganyika.[2] The main Ngoni group under the Jere clan went west of Lake Nyasa into Tanganyika, and remained a united group until the death of Zwangendaba in 1848. A disputed succession followed and the Ngoni split up under two rival Paramounts, Mpezeni and Mwambera. The history [814] of those years, as related to-day, is largely concerned with proving in each area that their Paramount is the only rightful one, the only one to whom the royal salute *Bayete* should be given. Mpezeni's historians say, 'Mwambera snatched *Bayete*'—and vice versa. In spite of these divergences in later history, however, the Ngoni point to their earlier 619 history and say, 'You see we are all one people'. They are conscious 829 of, and troubled about, their present divisions and inclined to attribute them to our premature arrival in the country. 'You came too soon. We would have fought until there was only one *inkosi*.'

814 The detailed knowledge of Ngoni history is regarded as the province of a specialist. 'How can a man of no wisdom remember all those names?' From time to time 'historians' tell episodes of this traditional history in the villages of the Paramount or of other im-

[1] 800–1,000 words.

[2] This is their own account and is confirmed by the Rev. Charles Stuart, formerly at Ekwendeni, but not so far recorded by other Europeans.

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5

portant chiefs. The Paramounts have told me that occasionally at their biannual 'meeting of chiefs' and *indunas*, some recital of history is made, especially if they want to quote a precedent or examine an old custom with a view to change. This historical tradition therefore is alive and has a recognized function in regulating Ngoni life. In one area part of it has been written in the vernacular and is used as a school history book.[1] In the other areas the Paramounts have spoken of the need for something of the same kind, as they recognize that with the coming of modern education it is an effective way of training the young in the traditions of the Ngoni past.

In addition to recitals of tradition by 'historians' there are many other reminders of the Ngoni past which are constantly before the people. An adequate examination of Ngoni history as it is expressed in their institutions and standardized behaviour would need an article to itself. I shall only mention here some ways and occasions through which tradition and old Ngoni institutions are brought before the people.

1. The praise songs of chiefs, war songs, regimental songs, names of famous regiments, and prayers for rain. These contain references, often rather obscure, to events and persons in the past. The praise songs are sung, or rather shouted, on special occasions, as when thanking the chief for beer, by members of important clans who alone know the words. The war songs and regimental songs recall the great days of conquest, and are sung and danced in war dress at big gatherings at the Paramount's village or at other chief's villages. The prayers for rain invoke the names of great chiefs in old days, but are now only a memory as they are no longer used in ceremonies—at least in none that I have found so far.

2. The names of prominent landmarks, such as hills and rivers where great chiefs built their villages and fights took place. Herd boys will point out a river and say, 'That is where Mtwalo built when he came from Choma', or 'That hill is where Singu hid in the Azungu war'. The historical events attached to these places are widely known and constantly before people's eyes in the diversified landscape of hills and valleys.

3. Important village names. During the trek north, the names of

[1] In Mwambera's country.

814 621 the villages of certain chiefs in the south were preserved.[1] In Mwambera's country there are the names of villages belonging to nine generations of Jere chiefs, and in Gomani's country for seven generations of Maseko chiefs. Villages holding these historic names are in charge of an individual of high rank who is never called the 'owner' of that village but 'the one who takes care'. I realized how clear to the people is the historical significance of these village names, when I asked a question and they exclaimed, 'What? You do not know about Elangeni being the village of Hlachwayo? But all Ngoni people can know that.'[2]

814 614 [193] [576] 4. Clan names. The clan names, as the Ngoni say, denote a person's 'tribe' and the respect due to him. With the prefix, *e*, *a*, *na* (according to the area) the clan name is used as a respectful form of address, and always when thanking for a gift or favour. The tone of reverence with which the great clan names are thus mentioned is itself an indication of the rank and honour of a person.

814 621 5. Village descent. In old days Ngoni villages were very much larger than to-day. The headman of a village on your first visit will always give you the genealogy of his village, how it split off from A, which split off from B, which was the *chigawa* under *induna* X of the big village of chief Y. Reciting these village genealogies generally leads to some recalling of the past, and the village notables, the *amadoda*, gather round to corroborate or correct the headman's recital.

814 It takes very little to stimulate the Ngoni to historical conversations. I have heard them originate in the return of a villager from Johannesburg, where he met Zulu and Swazi men and found they could speak together and had common traditions; in a sermon preached by an Ngoni minister in which he used illustrations from Ngoni warfare; in a rebuke from the Boma to a headman for trying to move his village from worn out land to a site outside the Reserve on an empty farm. And it is not only the aristocrats who take part in such conversations. Sometimes it is evident that men and boys whose [619] fathers had been slaves are anxious to show their knowledge of Ngoni history in order to prove their unity with the true Ngoni.

[1] I am not clear yet what was the precise sociological process by which the identity of these villages was preserved.

[2] An idiomatic use which has the force of a double negative 'No one cannot know it'.

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history in order to prove their unity with the true Ngoni. It is nevertheless recognized that the aristocrats, through their kinship links with the past, have the best knowledge; the rest listen and defer to them. For matters relating to history are no antiquarian interest to the Ngoni. It is probable that recalling history and dwelling on the great days of the past is to some extent a compensation for what the Ngoni consider the indignities of their position to-day. Yet it is also a stimulus to them to maintain their separate identity and to revere their institutions. Tradition supports rank, by recognizing the historical importance of certain clans; and rank preserves tradition because intimate knowledge is the proud monopoly of certain families.

V. TRADITION AND LEGEND AS DOCUMENTATION. To the anthropologist who examines the part played by tradition and legend in the culture of a people, Professor Malinowski has given an invaluable lead. He suggests that myths are the charter and documentation for traditional tribal life, 'statements of reality which live in the institutions and pursuits of the people';[1] and that legend is re-interpreted history. All peoples of whatever level of civilization interpret history in the light of their beliefs about themselves, their achievements, and their destiny. The Ngoni are no exception to this. Sometimes they relate factual history which is verifiable and accurate. At other times it is probably part fact, part fiction. Yet at all times the emphasis in, and interpretation of, tradition, has a definite purpose, and it is possible to see how a standardized form of a narrative has come to be accepted and believed in. The version of a narrative at one time was interpreted or moulded to serve a purpose. Having been established, it then moulds the thinking of the people on that particular issue. The vexed question of the supremacy of the two Paramounts, Mpezeni and Mwambera[2] is a case in point. The basis of the story of the original dispute is the same, but the version told in each 'country' differ in a succession of minute details, whose arrangement and emphasis prove the point in each case. Mpezeni's historians have arranged the details to prove that he is the rightful *inkosi*; Mwambera's historians

[1] B. Malinowski. Article on Culture in *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*.

[2] The two Paramounts at present holding these titles are grandsons of the first holders, to whom I refer as old Mpezeni.

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In 1895 the North Charterland Company was formed, distinct from and yet allied with the British South Africa Company,[1] with mining and trading rights over 10,000 square miles, most of which lay in Mpezeni's territory. The legal right to this concession was based on the British South Africa Company's treaties with 'dispossessed chiefs'. At the same time the North Charterland Company recognized that Mpezeni still held the effective sovereignty over the area, and that the success and safety of any mining or trading expedition sent to the territory depended on good relations being established with Mpezeni. They therefore persuaded Weise to join their staff in order to get Mpezeni's consent to the venture. They gained a foothold and did some prospecting, and then tried to impose a hut tax, and to exercise administrative powers through their own uniformed police of the Tonga tribe from Lake Nyasa—a tribe despised by the Ngoni. Two memoranda by Sir Harry Johnston to the Foreign Office set out the chain of events which led to the use of armed force against Mpezeni in January 1898, the pretext being the alleged danger of two white men in his country. Sir Harry Johnston wrote, 'Mpezeni is a very powerful Zulu chief and intimately allied with the Matabele. He offers no great objection to mining for gold but shows the greatest dislike to any interference with his independence or governing powers. The latter is the cause of his quarrel with Colonel Warton on the matter of a British flag and taxation.' He concludes the second memorandum with the remarks, 'Mpezeni is an intrusive Zulu robber who must sooner or later be dethroned and subdued. He is very powerful and is the only avowedly recalcitrant chief in all British Central Africa. When his hour comes he can be dealt with by the present Protectorate forces.' Following the last memoranda on the situation in Mpezeni's country the Foreign Office wrote to the British South Africa Company in April 1897, 'Lord Salisbury gathers that the North Charterland Company have maintained friendly relations with Mpezeni by withholding from his knowledge their connexion with the British South Africa Company and their British nationality. It is stated that the representative of the North Charterland Company has passed himself off to Mpezeni as brother to Weise.'

Lord Salisbury was well informed. When the Ngoni tell this story

[1] See North Charterland Inquiry.

in the villages to-day, they do it by going over and over the events of those fateful years 1885–1898, from the first arrival of Weise up to the Ngoni war, in the vain hope of finding a satisfactory explanation of the connexion between Weise, the British South Africa Company, the North Charterland Company, and the British Crown. They give correct and precise details of the various Europeans who came to old Mpezeni's kraal seeking concessions, and finding the old chief adamant about signing away any concessions. 'Weise was his friend. Then came Weise's brother. He began to take money for our huts. Then Singu (Mpezeni's heir) became angry. Then they said, "We are Charterland" and Mpezeni refused: "I have given no promise to Charterland." Then came the *Azungu* war.'

I have given the foregoing events in detail because they are facts of history both to the Ngoni and the British, and necessary for understanding the present attitude of the Ngoni to white people. The Ngoni have given me their version again and again, always the same in substance, and always with the same emphasis, first on the refusal of Sir Harry Johnston and the British South Africa Company to recognize Mpezeni as the rightful chief in the land, and secondly on the treachery of Weise which delivered them into the hands of the North Charterland Company. Nor was the defeat in war their final humiliation. Singu, Mpezeni's heir, was taken and shot together with his wives; half the cattle of the Ngoni were taken as 'rightful loot'; and the North Charterland Company began assigning farms to Europeans in their tract. Six years later old Mpezeni died, leaving his grandson, a comparatively young boy, as his successor. On the old *indunas* and other sons of old Mpezeni fell the burden of guiding the young *inkosi* and carrying on the political and legal machinery subject to European administration.[1] At the same time fundamental economic changes were taking place. Settlers were arriving to acquire land and demand labour. The country was gradually parcelled out into European farms and native reserves, not without prolonged ill-feeling on both sides.[2] With the opportunity to work for wages came a demand for taxes to cover the costs of administration, and this demand in its turn made many men go out of the territory in search of better paid work in Southern Rhodesia and the Union.

[1] Under British South Africa Company till 1924.

[2] See North Charterland Inquiry.

II:Lancaster G-5 (ca. 1935) 1937 FR5 Ngoni FR5

(19) The *isi-bongo*,[1] "Jere," appears to have definitely not been used prior to the year 1835, and from information received it is extremely unlikely that it was in general use until after the death of Zongendaba. The chief *isi-bongo* up to that time appear to have been Kumalo, Nqumayo, Tole (said to be the eye of an ox), Xaima, Gama, Mkhalapi, Ndhlovu, and Nkosi.

The *isitakazelo*[2] now little used were Ndaba and Ntungwa.

The language spoken by the Ngoni was closely allied to isi-swazi.

The Paramount Chief, Mpezeni II, still receives the royal salute of "Bayete" on all official occasions and in his own home.

(20)-Ba-Pule people. It is stated that, when the Ngoni first met these people, they carried long spears and shields made of game hides, and they could converse with the Ngoni in isi-swazi, which was not the language of the Ba-Pule; when they spoke their own language they were not understood by the Ngoni. The general opinion of the old indunas is that they were BaSuto people. They supplied excellent fighting material to the Ngoni impis and were treated as equals.

Interesting Note re death of Lobengula.

Lobengula, Chief of the Ama-Tebele. It is stated as follows.

Lobengula crossed the Zambesi at Manyerere Drift and arrived at the Mtenguleni Uka Sosera village on the Lutembwe River in January, 1894. He was carried by an Ngoni party who had been sent for that purpose. He was a very heavily built man with a large protruding belly, and breasts like those of a woman heavy in milk. So cumbersome was he, that he had to be helped to move about from one place to another. He had a great pipe in which he smoked hemp. If he passed the pipe he would talk, but if not it was a sign he wished to be alone. When Chief Mpezeni visited him he used to crawl on his hands and knees to greet him. The day Lobengula died the rock on the Sanjika Kopje split and fell and all the great Ngoni indunas mourned. Sanjika is on the road between Fort Jameson and Fort Manning. I have seen the split and fallen rock.

It is not known where Lobengula was buried; as he was a fugitive from justice, the secret was closely kept. It is said he died shortly after his arrival from the Zambesi in 1894. This information was given by an aged Ngoni councillor, named Repu, who resided near Fort Jameson, and died in 1927. This story is but little known and usually all knowledge is denied of this subject.

List of people who, being the oldest living Ngoni, attended a meeting held on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 18th, 19th and 20th of January, 1935, at the Paramount Chief's village to discuss the history of Chief Zongendaba:—Basaliyo Soko, Zamajaya Mphamu, Mahamanye Mphamu, Mahawa Wezo-Phiri, Dede Tole, Mjoho Mdwandi Jere, Mabvalalirhe Tembo, Mwaje Mkhawa, Katemda Nanyenny Mahowane, Kapendula Jamesi Mvula, Matidliza Mphamu, Chimpurhine Ngulowo, Chiwere Mainiko, Mzuka Jere, Mapalanga Mphamu, Chief Mpezeni Jere II, Chief Mudolomoyo, Andrew Kapatamoyo Jere, Jeremy Ndawandi Hara, Matrino Kangwere Mkhawa, Penyani Mvula, Adriyano Phiri, Zebulubulo (Inwani Mowere, Chingulukuni Hlazka, Siya Mvula, Ngonga Singa Jere, Mahawa Mphamu, Nwaki Lukhelo, Njumbwa Tembo, Adambwaike Mahanga, etc.

[1] [isi-bongo = sib name -- Analyst]

[2] [isitaKazelo = honorific epithets -- Analyst]